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ABSTRACT

The greatest effect of Brown v. Board of Education is that it removed race as a factor in making governmental decisions. Minority groups found greater solidarity and demanded their rights. This resulted in the myth of the melting pot being submerged by the myth of pluralism. Group identity can be mixed with society's ideals, which can then continue to support society. Two things must be kept in mind: schools don't control the forces which cause segregation, and minority opportunities will not improve simply by school desegregation. Recommended solutions include: linking housing policy with school desegregation, and development of housing and educational programs that make integration attractive. Educators will have to rely on themselves to make changes and to make integration work. (SAS)

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The Brown Decision, Pluralism, and the Schools in the 1980s

Remarks by Harold Howe II
Vice President for Education and Research, the Ford Foundation,
at a meeting of Chief State School Officers of the United States
Smugglers' Notch, Vermont, August 1, 1979

The myths we live by are often more significant than the facts of our lives. In the United States we have changed our myths in your lifetime and mine. When most of us gathered here went to elementary school, one prevailing myth about America and Americans was faith in the melting pot, a term for which we are indebted to Israel Zangwill, who wrote at the turn of the century, "America is God's Crucible, the Great Melting Pot where all races of Europe are melting and reforming." We saw ourselves and our fellow Americans as persons with strong common denominators based on a common history, on a common and somewhat simplistic patriotism, and on the hope of success in a land that had provided freedom and opportunity to many. We believed that those who joined us from abroad--ordinarily Europe--might have trouble getting started in America, but we were sure from the experience of past generations that the benign action of the melting pot would soon turn them into "real" Americans, who shared the traditions and beliefs of the rest of us and who would start climbing the ladder of success as soon as they were Americanized.

Most of us conveniently forgot that persons with black skins, Hispanics whose ancestors may have arrived here before our own, and Native Americans were exceptions to this myth, and those who remembered this unpleasant fact

tended to regard it as an exception rather than a denial of the myth. Persons who insisted on preserving their native language and culture were seen as almost un-American. If they chose this foolish course, we were not to blame for the troubles they encountered in America. Persons whose ancestors had been slaves were subjected to official and unofficial discrimination. Native Americans had suffered a special kind of inequality to which we had grown accustomed. Many states in our Union maintained ingenious ways to deprive Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans of political, economic, and personal rights even though the Constitution under which we all lived forbade discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or national origin.

Our parents' vision of the myth in those years of our own elementary education saw the schools as the main device for heating the melting pot, particularly the schools of the cities. Under their influence, the illiterate would become literate, the foreign would become American and shed their strangeness, and the bottom rungs of the ladder of success would become available to most everyone. It was a comforting view, that made us feel good about our land and ourselves. It's too bad it was only half true, with enough misconceptions and errors to warrant labelling it a myth.

Today we have a new and different myth that grows in part from our national experience in the 1960s and 1970s. It is called pluralism, and its main feature is denial of the melting pot. Now American society is seen by many as a loose association of competing groups, each of which makes a first claim on the

loyalty and interest of its members--a claim so strong that it often supersedes or ignores the common denominators that hold us together as one people. We have become a nation of minorities, each emphasizing its race or its language or its culture or its national origin or some combination of these. Of course, pluralism as an idea for characterizing American society has been around for a long time, but only recently has it gained ascendency over the melting pot.

The schools are caught up in this new myth, just as they were in the old one. Under a decision of the Supreme Court, the language of a minority must be recognized in the schools, and we have invented bilingual education, a concept to which we give numerous definitions depending on the characteristics of the group and sometimes of the individual. Various groups demand that the curriculum of the schools recognize their past history and their cultural interests, and the schools regard it as their duty to respond. Group loyalties are so powerful that they impel people to deny the dream of an integrated school and an integrated society and to stick together in relative isolation, even though this may ultimately defeat the aspiration most people have for joining the mainstream of economic success and the guarantee of individual rights.

The Brown decision and the developments that flowed from it powerfully influenced the transition from one myth to the other, less as a result of the specific arguments of the decision itself than of the forces it awakened in the land, forces that gathered strength rapidly in the 1950s, deeply affected our national life in the 1960s, and solidified themselves in recent years. While the legal impact of the

Brown decision was to overturn the doctrine of "separate but equal," stemming from the earlier Court ruling in Plessy vs. Ferguson in 1896, its real impact was in the assertion that racial characteristics are unacceptable in the United States as a basis for decisions of government about people. It proclaimed the end of second-class citizenship and called for equality in the broadest sense. More than that, it said to millions of Americans, who had been officially discriminated against, not only that they were equal to their oppressors but also that they had some right to redress of wrongs from those same parties. It qualified that right of redress by saying it could not be expected immediately but "with all deliberate speed," whatever that meant. In effect Brown said, you can't have two melting pots, one for Europeans and one for others who will be kept separate.

Armed with this elusive promise of equality, Blacks, Hispanics, and some others set out to capture the rights they had been promised but denied, and they found it no easy task. No one was going to give them their newly defined legal rights on a platter. They would have to fight for them in busses, at lunch counters, at voter registration offices, with school boards, in state legislatures, in the United States Congress, and in the courts. The fight was to be long and frustrating and bitter, and it is not over yet. Nor will it be when you and I pass on our responsibilities for education to another generation.

An important by-product of that long and bitter fight was the increased solidarity of the minority groups engaged in it. The frustrations encountered

by Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans as they attempted to claim rights that were legally theirs but denied them in practice turned them back to their own fellowship for psychological sustenance. Only a few of them succeeded in joining the mainstream, in making the transition to the middle class, or in attaining a true rapport that could be described as integration with the dominant white group. In effect the melting pot remained a concept for European immigrants rather than for our country's oldest minorities.

These experiences fertilized the seeds of pluralism, a doctrine that proclaims quite correctly that a person's race and heritage and language are qualities to be proud of and to draw strength from rather than to be denied and rejected. The "Black is Beautiful" emphasis through which we passed in the 1960s, was an exaggerated but necessary phase of this phenomenon. Other examples were black, Hispanic, and other ethnic studies introduced almost overnight in schools and colleges. They frequently were ill-conceived and ill-taught, and they sometimes resulted in denial of a solid education for young people; but they met a deep need for self-definition and self-respect in minority groups. Still another example was the demand of Blacks for black dormitories and social centers on college campuses that surprised many white college presidents, who thought that integration was what minority persons should want.

As Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans began to make some gains through their newly effective solidarity, other ethnic groups in American society had two reactions. First, they resented the competition of the older minorities, particularly at the transition point from government-supported poverty

to economic independence. They saw more Blacks making that transition and believed, rightly in some instances, that Blacks' economic ascent challenged their own. Secondly, they saw that this kind of change was possible for Blacks and for some Hispanics because they were organized into groups that could bring leverage on government and get results.

These two lessons combined to denigrate the melting pot as the model for success in America, and various groups joined the pluralist bandwagon as the route to their own salvation. In effect they said "the hell with waiting around to be assimilated into the mainstream; we must organize and get ours quicker, just as the Blacks are doing."

At this point I am prepared to concede that the foregoing is a simplistic interpretation of a complex series of events. I am prepared also to argue that there is enough validity to it to use it as a taking off point for talking about what our schools need to consider as they plan their strategies for serving American society in the years ahead. The 1980s will be a time when our schools must revive some of the virtues of the melting pot, reduce some of the excesses of pluralism, and blend these two together in a new vision of American society that seeks simultaneously to identify important common denominators for all our people, while recognizing the richness and value of the many traditions and cultures from which Americans claim major elements of their strength and their satisfaction.

You may want to argue that these two concepts are fundamentally opposed and that we must go one way or the other--that we cannot be many peoples and

one people at the same time. In response to this, I say only that we can if we will try hard enough. The same type of argument is frequently made about education in America, when it is asserted that we cannot achieve an educational system that has both excellence and equality as its major characteristics. I submit, however, that a fair look at the evidence suggests we have gone a long way in our schools and colleges toward achieving these twin purposes simultaneously. Right now we are going through a phase of attempting to repair the quality of excellence in our schools, just as we went through a phase in the 1960s of emphasis on openness and equal opportunity. Today we too easily forget that each succeeding generation of Americans has been more literate than its predecessor; and in our enthusiasm for reparing evident shortcomings in the schools, we forget also their great achievements in providing this society with an educated citizenry.

So it is possible in America to fit together into a working whole strong trends that have some elements of opposition. It takes persistence, good judgment and firm resistance to the temptations of extremism. It places special strains on leaders, who must avoid over-reacting to the cyclical swings of reform movements and losing a sense of balance.

A society that succeeds in balancing the claims of pluralism and the melting pot will be like a smoothly working jazz combo.* The instrumentalists merge their playing to create their music, which is then powerfully augmented

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* I am indebted to Professor David Riesman of Harvard University for the idea of this analogy.

and enriched as one after another--the pianist, the drummer, the trumpter, the saxophonist, and the bass player--performs in his personal and unique style with a solid background from the rest of the group. One may shine more than another; if he can, so be it. But the set always ends with a flourish in which all are interwoven and with a result that is greater than the sum of the solo parts.

The fact of racial differences in America has placed a greater strain on the myth of the melting pot than any other of the factors that occasionally divide our people. And the same fact has created a dilemma for the concept of pluralism, which to be workable at all must assume that groups seeking to preserve their identity will have equal opportunity, not only for group status but also for the individual standing of group members in the larger society. During most of our history, we have denied equality in status both to racially identifiable groups and to individuals from those groups. It was the Brown decision that pulled us up short by asserting that race was unacceptable as a basis for decisions by government about Americans.

This past history casts its shadow over all of us every day of our lives. We cannot escape it. It tests our moral fiber, our idealism, and our commitment to what we say we believe. When we hold up a mirror and look at ourselves honestly, that shadow dominates our reflection.

Nowhere is the strain and stress of living in this shadow more evident than in those institutions which serve the coming generation and to which we commit a large proportion of our hopes for the future, the elementary and secondary schools. We depend fundamentally on the schools, both to pass on to

our children the civilization we have inherited, as well as to create in them the wit and the will continually to reshape that civilization closer to our ideas than we have. In spite of the studies of some social scientists, who contend that education is unable to overcome the handicaps of racial discrimination and economic disadvantage, and in spite of the claims of a few theorists who argue that traits of mind and motivation are innate and immutable, Americans generally remain committed to the view that we can create schools with the capacity to move people out of the shadows of the past and into a new era of light. While that commitment has wavered some in recent years, it generally remains strong. We will allow it to erode at our peril.

For the twenty-five years since the Brown decision, a significant arena for testing our commitment to fairness in American society has been the embattled issue of school desegregation. There are other important elements in the long American march to a just society, including issues about employment opportunities and political rights on which some progress has been made, but the central concern for educators and an important continuing challenge for all Americans is ridding our schools of the taint of racism. We have made some progress on this front also, but we have a long way to go before we are anywhere near the dream that was so powerfully enunciated from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington by Martin Luther King in 1963.

This is not the place for a history of the ebb and flow of the contest over school desegregation. Most of you have lived through it and have vivid memories, as I do, of victories and defeats, of pursuing what turned out to be simplistic

and ineffective solutions, and of fashioning remedies for segregation and racial isolation that placed the burden of redressing these wrongs more heavily on their victims than on the perpetrators. There was rarely a better contest for Monday morning quaterbacking than the contest over desegregation of the schools.

We have learned some hard lessons from our experience with school desegregation in the years since the Brown decision, although we are not always willing to admit it. The two most important lessons of the first twenty-five years since Brown should shape our thinking as we plan our course for the 1980s:

--First, the forces in American society that bring about segregated living and produce racial isolation in neighborhoods and schools are not within the control of the schools nor of the authorities that operate them, although those authorities sometimes align themselves with these forces rather than opposing them. These forces stem on the one hand from private decision-making that is too often motivated by well disguised racial prejudice and on the other from government programs in housing, transportation, and other areas of national policy with objectives unrelated to education but with powerful if unintended effects on where people live and where their children go to school.

--Second, it is simplistic to believe, as many of us did well into the 1960s, that merely bringing together in school children from minority and white majority backgrounds will, in and of itself, provide minority children with the special opportunities they need to move out of the shadow of more than a hundred years of legal and illegal discrimination.

The first of these lessons about the forces that encourage racial isolation in the living patterns of our cities and suburbs should make us rethink our long-term strategy for school desegregation in the years ahead. It is just plain unrealistic to expect that solely by litigation and its resulting court orders for a variety of traditional remedies such as magnet schools, bussing, redistricting, pairing of schools and the like, we can devise a permanent solution to the school desegregation problems of the massive concentrations of minority group people collected in our largest cities. Nor it is reasonable to assume that enforcement action by HEW under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act can do much more than nibble at the edges of such problems.

I do not want to be misunderstood on this point, for I am not advocating the end of bussing, the curtailment of litigation, or any decline in the energy with which HEW pursues its duty to enforce the law. All these activities must continue. They are the best medicines we can prescribe now for the disease of segregated urban schools. They bring some change and some progress, and in some smaller cities they offer real hope of beneficial change. But in the most difficult situations, they are palliatives rather than cures. It is possible that litigation seeking metropolitan solutions that include suburban and central city school systems in common desegregation plans may be of major help, but so far the federal courts have been wary of this approach.

There are, however, important possibilities for a more comprehensive, long-term strategy directed at avoiding the condition of two separate societies--one white and one black and Hispanic--or perhaps even three separate societies,

with the rapidly growing proportion of Hispanics settled in enclaves of linguistic and cultural separatism--a development which holds the danger for the United States of its own Spanish-speaking version of the Canadian experience in Quebec. Such a strategy might be forged by bringing together in the courts, in enforcement actions through the administrative departments of government, and in various incentive schemes, the multiple concerns about racial discrimination in schools, in housing, and in other areas.

In recent months the Justice Department has reorganized its efforts to attack discrimination in education and in housing by bringing these two usually separate fields under the same office in its Civil Rights Division. The possibility of school desegregation suits with fair housing litigation worked into them to bring the federal courts into these two clearly related issues at the same time is already being explored in the Justice Department.

On the administrative enforcement front under the requirements of the 1964 and 1968 Civil Rights Acts, it should be possible to devise joint administrative enforcement actions by HUD and HEW, although the idea of two separate departments cooperating in such a politically volatile task probably isn't practical without an initiative from the President to tell them to do so. Desegregation of schools or housing or anything else is not a popular subject with any President, and the last three of them have managed to avoid it most of the time. It is unpopular because it is a loser in the political sense; you stand to lose more votes than you gain by insisting that racial minorities enjoy their constitutional rights to non-discriminatory housing and schooling. But what if a President had

enough vision to see that a new long-term strategy linking housing policies and school desegregation might enable him to suggest the possibility of reducing court orders requiring bussing and of eventually reducing the need for bussing to give children their constitutional rights? It seems to me that such a promise might be turned into a political asset. Right now when the former Secretary of HUD has just become the Secretary of HEW isn't a bad time to consider joint approaches to discrimination in education and housing.

Incentive programs can be conceived that don't require racial integration but that reward it sufficiently to make city planners, school authorities, and even individual families think twice about foregoing the economic benefits offered for desegregated schools and housing. I shall not attempt to stipulate the details of such programs, but I do believe that they constitute a relatively unexplored area. We have something of the kind now in what is called Emergency School Assistance for school districts that are actively desegregating and have need for special funds. Preferences for housing loans both in terms of who gets them and the rate of interest might encourage some movement away from racial concentrations and toward integrated living patterns. Certainly we need to recognize that the record of federally supported housing authorities in creating the ghettos of America is not a proud one, and we should find ways to turn their influence in more constructive directions. I wonder if anyone has thought of requiring the new and popular tax free bonds issued by cities and towns for private housing mortgages to satisfy a test of racial integration before receiving approval of tax exemption.

To sum up these observations on new initiatives in school desegregation, let me quote from a letter I received from Paul Dimond, one of the attorneys involved in the recent Columbus and Dayton cases before the Supreme Court, and a person with a significant record in seeking both constitutional rights and better education for the children in our schools.

> "In all our thinking about new initiatives, however, I don't think we should ever let HUD, HEW, Commerce, and Justice off the hook easily. They do have large program and enforcement responsibilities that could be coordinated and redirected in a fashion that is consistent with ending the process of segregation. I don't accept as inevitable, for example, that HUD programs must aid middle income persons to be consistent with integration objectives; that HUD, Commerce, and HEW low-income and urban revitalization efforts must perpetuate segregation rather than promote integration; that the Justice Department must forever rely solely on litigation, rather than including administrative oversight and coordination, because of the in-bred biases of some lawyers; that Title VI, Title VII, or Title VIII* must inevitably slip into disrepute from lack of creative implementation and failure to date to establish any substantive standards. Better federal policy and action in these areas is politically feasible and administratively workable;

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* Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 on fair housing

and it certainly is not inconsistent with grass-roots and incentive approaches. We can and should ask more of the Carter Administration and its successor administrations, even while building a better political climate and developing and targeting some creative and effective incentive efforts and enforcement strategies for integration." *

Turning to the second of our hard-won lessons on school desegregation, what can be said about the paucity of evidence that school desegregation has so far produced large-scale improvements in measurable learning among black children? We are in about the same place in studying the effects of school desegregation that we were in studying the significance of class size twenty years ago. We have slowed up the process of making newly designed studies from basic data and started to do studies of past studies.

The most recent of these by Robert Crain and Rita Mahard of the Rand Corporation shows that 73 studies of school desegregation found positive effects on black achievement in 40, negative effects in 12, and no effects at all in 21 for a generally positive picture of the learning effects of school desegregation, as contrasted with more negative views expressed earlier by the renowned James Coleman, the patriarch among analytical scholars of racial differences in schools.

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* letter to Harold Howe II from Paul R. Dimond, June 27, 1979

I don't expect much more insight from studies like these than is already available to us. By and large, the finer points of interpretation that emerge from the regression equations used by sophisticated analysts are of more use to scholars for the conduct of arguments with each other than they are to teachers, principals, and school superintendents for improving education. Nor are these studies much use to those whose obligation it is to enforce the law and to bring students their consititional right to desegregated schools. As I shall point out in more detail in a moment, the constitutional obligation to desegregate the schools has little or nothing to do with the learning outcomes of meeting such requirements.

About all that can be said now about the effects of desegregation is that sometimes it helps learning and sometimes it doesn't; probably more often than not, it does. The mechanisms by which desegregation is introduced into schools and classrooms determine the consequences for learning. But the naive hope some of us had that desegregating the schools would rapidly remove the learning differences between blacks and whites turns out to be exactly what it was, naive. As the Carnegie Council on Children underlined for us in its 1977 report, All Our Children,* the handicaps inherent in the economic conditions, health, and other disadvantages suffered by poor and minority families are

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* All Our Children: The American Family Under Pressure by Kenneth Keniston, 1977, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

fundamental causes of inequality that can limit the child's capacity to take advantage of the traditional school program.

But this does not mean that educators should either give up in despair while awaiting the advent of economic equity or reduce their efforts to improve and desegregate the schools. About the only help that educators can get from social scientists is the realization that the job they are trying to do is more complex than they expected. In a sense, this is real help because it allows them to deal with reality rather than with unrealistic hopes. But in terms of what to do that is different from what they are doing and that might make a difference, educators are pretty much on their own. They will have to draw on hunches, on very limited evidence from research, and more than anything else on their own notions of what is right. Using such sources as my guide, I want to bring these observations to a close with some suggestions for those responsible for the schools in the 1980s.

First of all, don't be deterred from desegregating the schools because doing so seems to have limited effects on test scores in reading and mathematics. That is not what school desegregation is all about, at least in the first instance. The constitutional requirement to desegregate where there is evidence of discrimination by public authority was established by the Supreme Court in 1954 and reiterated by it a month ago in the Dayton and Columbus cases. It has nothing to do with tests, achievement levels, or other scorekeeping by educators. It is instead a prohibition of racial discrimination by official bodies. As James Coleman himself once said, "Let's suppose the 1966 research of mine

(Equality of Educational Opportunity) had come out with the opposite conclusion--namely, that black children did worse in predominantly middle-class schools. Should the courts have used that as an argument? I cannot envision a decision saying that segregation is constitutionally required because black children do better in segregated classrooms." *

I would add to James Coleman's assertion opposing official discrimination that constitutional rights cannot and should not be conditioned by student performance. We assure freedom for the press in our constitution and suffer numerous abuses from the fourth estate in order to preserve it. Freedom of religion allows many practices that a majority of Americans would at best consider foolish. Why do we insist that the constitutional right to freedom from racial discrimination by public authority makes no sense unless it produces better reading scores? **

But if we desegregate the schools to give children their constitutional rights regardless of the learning outcomes, we still have the overwhelmingly important job of doing something about the latter. It is probably true that the deprivations of poverty and racial discrimination over long years cannot be entirely overcome by the schools alone. Nevertheless, there are enough instances of success by skilled teachers working in alliance with parents who care and with the encouragement of dedicated principals to make me think that

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* New York Times Magazine, August 24, 1975

** I am indebted to Gregory Anrig, Chief State School Officer in Massachusetts, for the development of this argument.

the schools can do considerably more than they are now doing. And the gains that the schools can make are not dependent upon completing the process of desegregation, although that can help to some degree. In addition to meeting our legal obligations we must learn to use the talent we have in America's schools to raise the skills and the morale of those teachers and principals who now find their task unmanageable and their jobs frustrating.

I suspect that one reason for the decline in morale and the growth of discouragement among school teachers has been the vote of no confidence they have received from the political representatives of the American people. I know of no profession that has been harassed to the same degree by politicians, who have decided to take into their own hands the details of a complex business, teaching and learning, that these same politicians know very little about. They have imposed state laws about the accountability of teachers and the testing of children that intrude into the educational process in unforeseen ways. The bandwagon of basic competency testing has spread so rapidly that it is hard to find a state without this unproved nostrum as its main answer to the improvement of teaching and learning.

You and I know that educational measurement carefully and properly used has some value in a school improvement program, and we know also that without a much larger investment in ensuring quality of instruction it has little value and is probably a deterrent to learning. I wonder why we have allowed this wave of muddle headed thinking and ill- informed action to break over us? Overemphasis on tests is analogous to a medical procedure that consists solely of diagnosis

without ever prescribing a remedy. In addition, most of the testing now being required is useless for defining the remedy needed for an individual child.

In schools which have undergone formal desegregation there is a special opportunity because the process of desegregating shakes things up and offers the chance to rethink organization, curriculum, and other fundamental elements of the school's program. Where this opportunity is grasped imaginatively, there is research evidence that learning improves.

All this suggests that we will have to spend the 1980s fashioning programs in every school to help teachers to be more successful with children. Such efforts can succeed. They depend upon learning how to take into account the beliefs, attitudes, and culture that children bring to school with them. They depend also upon working with children as individuals, maintaining high expectations in school for all the children there, building links between the school and the home, providing resources to help teachers with difficult problems, strengthening principals' skills as instructional leaders, and turning our energies in educational research from large-scale surveys of highly analyzed data to careful observation and illumination of the intimate business of teaching and learning that occurs between teacher and child.

In support of these assertions, I call to your special attention the recent research in London by Michael Rutter and his colleagues. They appear to me to be well on the way to proving that schools with certain characteristics can and do make a difference to so-called disadvantaged students, and to proving in addition that the factors in schools that matter most in determining their capacity for

positive influences on "pupils' behavior, attendance, exam success and delinquency" are "the characteristics of schools as social institutions." Their study concludes "that schools can do much to foster good behavior and attainments, and that even in a disadvantaged area, schools can be a force for good." *

These are refreshing assertions in the face of the oversimplified generalizations that the United States media have popularized to the effect that schools don't make a difference. As I have noted earlier, schools may not be able all on their own to overcome all the effects of poverty and discrimination, but there is clear evidence in Rutter's research that they can be much more effective in moving toward this goal if they are properly organized and operated. This will come as no news to many teachers and principals, but it may surprise a few social scientists, who are accustomed to judging the schools by reading computer printouts rather than visiting them. This is like studying matrimony by reading the divorce statistics.

Bringing about a commitment to these purposes in our schools cannot be legislated by state or national government. It is more the business of local school boards and local superintendents and still more the concern of principals and teachers. But state and national governments can help in two ways--by providing funds and by refraining from writing detailed prescriptions about how they are to

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* Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children, Michael Rutter et al, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, p. 205

be used. The best rethinking and reform of practice in the schools will come from persons who encounter children every day, not from persons removed from that experience.

Back in 1967 the Congress and the President created the Education Professions Development Act to provide resources for the retraining of teachers and other educational personnel. The core of this legislation was allowed to lapse in 1975. Although it had some imperfections, we need something like it in the 1980s. Also, we need to recognize in states and local districts that funds from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the really large-scale source of federal money for schools, can be turned to the same purposes. In addition, schools need more freedom then they are now allowed to combine funds from different sources for the benefit of children in the classroom. The concept that the numerous federal programs for assistance to education must be separate and discrete in the school is a prescription for educational chaos.

In conclusion I return to where this discussion began, to the myths we live by. One of those myths is that Americans can solve any problem in short order if only they will turn their energies to the task. The experience of the past twenty years in the schools with the related issues of school desegregation and school improvement should by now have convinced us that as far as the schools are concerned, this is indeed a myth. We are engaged in a long, difficult struggle with intractable and multi-faceted difficulties. We shall still be so engaged at the onset of the 1990s. There is no quick fix.

But in the ten years ahead of us we have a chance to make some progress. That chance depends upon tempering our attitudes toward both pluralism and the melting pot in ways that will allow us to draw strength from both, upon rethinking our obligations and our strategies for bringing children their constitutional rights under the Brown decision, and upon school reform fundamentally based on the exchange between teachers and children.